

in the exceptional position of being superior to those who use it. Finnic and Hungarian have considerable literatures, and are well adapted for poetry. The Basque, which, not merely in Europe, but in the entire eastern hemisphere, is a speech apart from all around it, has a peculiar interest for us from its affinities with some of the native tongues of this continent. Of these, Mr. Strong, in his "North Americans of Antiquity," says that the number is estimated at thirteen hundred, and Mr. Hubert Bancroft, in his "Native Races of the Pacific States," has classified six hundred distinct languages between northern Alaska and the Isthmus of Panama. But of these many are only dialects. Of all the American tongues, the greatest antiquity is assigned to the Maya-Quiché, of which the characteristics are said to be "flexibility, expressiveness, vigour, approximating to harshness," while it is also described as rich and musical in sound. As an instance of the extremes to which some theorists carry a favorite hobby, it may be mentioned that Dr. Plougeon sets down one-third of the Maya tongue as pure Greek! That which is now known as the Ilihua, and is in use among the Indians of Peru, is important on account of the civilization of which it was once the medium, as is also, for a like reason, the Nahua or Aztec. Of three important northern languages, Canadian clergymen have recently published original dictionaries or revised editions of old ones. These are the Ojibwe (or Ojibway) Dictionary (with grammar) of Bishop Baraga, published in an improved form by Father Lacombe, the Dictionary (with grammar) of the Cree language, by the same authors, and the Abbé Cuq's "Lexique de la langue iroquoise." The value of these works to the philologist, and to those engaged in mission work on Canadian territory, can hardly be over-estimated. Professor Campbell, of Montreal, has prepared a comparative vocabulary of American Indian and East-Asian tongues and dialects, which is printed as an appendix to his interesting lecture on the "Aborigines of Canada." Dr. G. M. Dawson's vocabulary of the Haida Indians of the Prince Charlotte Islands is another valuable contribution to our store of knowledge. He suggests that the syllable *h* or *hl*, prefixed to many words, probably in most cases represents the article. It occurs to me that it might also indicate some kinship with the languages of Mexico, of which this literal combination is a marked feature. A tradition has long prevailed (see Bartlett's "Personal Narrative, etc.," Vol. II., p. 283.) that the Aztecs or Ancient Mexicans migrated from the north to the valley of Mexico, and made three principal halts on their way thither. On this point, Mr. Bartlett says that "no analogy has as yet been traced between the language of the old Mexicans and any tribe at the north in the district from which they are supposed to have come; nor, in any of the relics, or ornaments or works of art, do we observe a resemblance between them." Now, as will be seen by Dr. G. M. Dawson's account of the Haida Indians, and by the accompanying illustrations, they surpass all the other northern tribes in "construction, carving and other forms of handiwork," and he entertains a hope that they may be enlisted in other and more profitable forms of industry. If, then, the feature of their language just mentioned can be proved to indicate a relationship with that of the Aztecs, there would certainly be some ground for the belief that they are a fragment of the original northern stock from which, according to so many writers, the conquering Mexicans were derived.

Were any of the American languages adapted to the needs of a higher civilization, or, had not the Spaniards in the 15th and 16th centuries interrupted the spontaneous advance of the aboriginal empires in the paths of progress, might they, unaided, have reached a